1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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595 last-named author (b: IV, 279) states that the Miskito have only one wife. Dampier (I, 9) and Jeffery (45) likewise state that the Miskito marry but one wife with whom they live until death separates them.

586 DIVORCE.—Occasionally husband and wife separate by mutual consent, the children remaining in charge of the mother. A woman is generally abandoned by her husband if she does not give birth to any children. The young husband does not remain at the hut of his parents-in-law when he is sick, but returns home to undergo treatment; in case his disease is incurable, or if he is lazy or cruel, he may not be admitted again at the house of his parents-in-law, and the marriage is then considered dissolved. The husband has, however, the right to claim payment for all the presents he has made to his wife or to her family.

587 REMARRIAGE.—If a widow wishes to remarry she must be bought from the heirs, that is, the relations of her dead husband. Such a payment is known as "widow money" (M.: *pyarka mana;* T., P.: *tiñmak minit;* U.: *pyarka makalaak*). The widow is considered the property of her husband and with the death of the latter passes to his relations.

In no case is a widow allowed to remarry until the festival of the dead (M.: *sikro, sikro;* S.: *sik*) has taken place, which is about one year after the death of her husband. In case the future husband agrees to have this festival celebrated at his own expense, he need not pay anything else for the widow. The author who wrote about 1699 under the initials M. W. (309) was evidently mistaken in stating that among the Miskito the widow was allowed to remarry three days after the death of her husband. According to Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 254), who wrote about the same period, this action could not take place until two years later.

CHILDREN: THEIR BIRTH AND EDUCATION

● 144 SECLUSION AT CHILDBIRTH.—The prospective Miskito mother occupies a small hut (*dûkaa sutla*), built for her by her husband in the bush, at a short distance from her home, just as she does during the menstrual period. She remains there about two weeks, accompanied by a female relation or friend. She has to observe similar regulations as at the menses, for she is considered impure and may pollute the house and contaminate the other inmates. She is particularly exposed to attack from snakes, beasts, and supernatural beings, and neither she nor her child must be seen by the sukya. She must also abstain from certain food, not only on account of her own well-being, but also on that of the community as a whole. The Sumu woman, however, accouches in a corner of the hut, which has been screened off either with bark cloth or with thatch.

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DELIVERY.—Only females are present at childbirth, the elder or more experienced ones acting as midwives. The methods employed to hasten delivery are in general very brutal, and they lead occasionally to the death of both mother and child. One of the befriended persons present severs the navel string with the aid of a sharpened piece of bamboo or a wood splinter, and then ties it with a cotton thread. In virtue of this act she will henceforth be considered as a blood relation to the newborn child and the latter's parents as well, and they call each other reciprocally *lapya* or *lahpya*. This corresponds loosely to the *compadre* and *comadre* system of the Ladinos. The *lapya* appears to have been limited in former days to the Miskito, but lately it has spread to the other tribes of the Mosquito Coast—Sumu, Rama, and Paya. The afterbirth is buried by one of the women as soon as it is expelled. The same is also done with the umbilical cord, in order to prevent pigs, dogs, or other animals from eating it up, which may result in sickness or death for the baby.

COUVADE.—Traces of the couvade may be observed among both Miskito and Sumu. During the first days of the newborn child the father will refrain from hard work and keep out of the bush. He will also abstain from certain foods and from salt and chili pepper. The mother also has to keep a diet. Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 253) denies the existence of the couvade among the Miskito, but the actual facts have probably escaped his observation. This author states that the mother bathes her baby at the next river, wraps it up in a *cabalas* (=*kwala* "cloth") and then follows her usual occupation. According to my various informants the bath of the mother and the child is postponed until the third day after delivery. But the mother is considered impure for from one to two weeks longer. After that period has elapsed she may return to her husband, who prepares a feast with food and drink in honor of the baby and the *lapya*.

BIRTHMARKS.—Birthmarks (M. and S.: *wauki*) are ascribed by both tribes to the failure of the mother to obtain during pregnancy a certain article of food for which she had a vehement desire. The Indians supply, if possible, a woman *encienta* with any kind of food for which she may ask. If during that state she should have a craving for a slice of pineapple the husband will do his utmost to procure the fruit. Should the prospective mother learn that it is impossible to obtain it, and then thoughtlessly pass her hand over her head, breast, or arm, the child would be born in due time with the mark of a pineapple at the corresponding part of the body. A somewhat similar belief exists among the ignorant people in large areas in Europe.

A certain skin disease is found sometimes on the newly born child, and is known among the Miskito by the name *dus arbias* "gnawing of trees." Its origin is traced to the fact that the mother, while *encienta*,

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* a man who has been wronged is considered a coward if he does not avenge himself. If revenge fails, both the offended man and the perpetrator of the offense are supposed to commit suicide. A thief, when caught, must return double the amount stolen. A creditor may help himself to his debtor's property, or he may destroy the property of a third person, in which case the debtor must pay the damage (*Mosquito*). An adulterous wife is beaten and forced to reveal the name of her lover, who is fined. A murderer is killed, unless he commits suicide, and his memory is dishonored. There is, however, no dishonor in poisoning an enemy, the method employed for most murders.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A man and woman may agree to marry, or, more rarely, the girl's parents may make marriage arrangements without her consent. Child betrothals are common. Cross-cousin marriage is frequent, but marriage between parallel-cousins and closer relations is forbidden. *Mosquito* and *Sumo* chiefs and shamans have several wives, and the *Paya* of Río Platano and Río Paulaya practice polygyny, as do the *Jicaque*.

Before marriage a man must pass through various ordeals, pay the bride's family an agreed sum, and prepare a field for his prospective wife. The wedding is a simple ceremony. The levirate and sororate are practiced, and the many possible exceptions to this rule are adjusted by payments. A man may abandon his wife if she is barren. Divorce is accomplished by means of payments to the families of offended parties. The woman always keeps the children. Among numerous relationship taboos are the important mother-in-law taboo and the prohibition on a man's speaking to his sister-in-law and to other close female relatives by marriage.

LIFE CYCLE

Childbirth.—The *Paya* and *Mosquito* build special confinement huts; the *Sumo* partition off a corner of the house. During parturition the mother is aided by another woman who cuts the cord with a piece of bamboo. The afterbirth and umbilical cord are buried. Among the *Paya* a midwife is regarded by parents and child as a blood relative. This belief is said to have originated among the *Mosquito* and diffused to the *Sumo* and *Paya*. The second of twins and deformed children are killed (*Mosquito* and *Sumo*). Some female children were killed at birth.

Sumo and *Mosquito* women bathe immediately after bearing a child, *Paya* women on the third day. *Sumo* women take a steam bath but use no special structure; in other tribes they bathe in the river. This bath ends a period of ritual impurity. *Mosquito* women, however, are considered impure for one or two weeks. Women also observe a special diet. The return of the mother to the house is celebrated with a ceremony.